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SCHAKOWSKY MEETS WITH OLMERT, ENCOURAGES PEACE Negotiations WITH ABBAS, CLEAN ENERGY COOPERATION

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert yesterday after the Prime Minister delivered a rousing speech before a joint session of Congress that was interrupted several times by standing ovations.

In the meeting, Prime Minister Olmert expressed his appreciation for the overwhelming bipartisan support he received before both chambers of Congress. He emphasized how much the friendship between the United States and Israel meant to him and the Israelis. The Prime Minister noted that the Israeli people had watched the joint session live on television. He particularly thanked the Jewish members in the delegation for always being there for Israel.

Schakowsky commended the Prime Minister's strong commitment to working toward a lasting peace in the Middle East, and expressed her ongoing support for Israel's efforts to finalize a two-state solution. Schakowsky also praised Prime Minister Olmert for reaching out to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who represents a voice of moderation in the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority.

Representative Schakowsky said she was grateful to the Prime Minister for highlighting a bill she co-sponsored, the United States-Israel Energy Cooperation Act. "Creating a federal grant program to fund joint ventures between American and Israeli businesses, academic institutions and non-profit agencies that promote the development of clean energy technologies is a win-win for Israel and the United States," stated Rep. Schakowsky. "The passage of this bill would bolster the security of both nations by decreasing our dependence on Middle Eastern oil. It would also strengthen the economy of both nations by creating jobs and transforming the energy industry. This legislation would promote sustainable development and protect the environment, not only in the U.S. and in Israel, but throughout the world."

Schakowsky committed to promote this bill in the Energy and Commerce Committee, of which she is a member. Along with the rest of the delegation, she pledged to continue to work to strengthen the relationship between the U.S. and Israel.